

Remarks/Arguments

The deadline for filing a response to the present Action was December 15, 2003. A Request for Extension of Time Under 37 CFR 1.136(a) is being filed with this Amendment, along with a check for the extension fee, in order to extend the deadline, with weekend and Federal holidays, to February 17, 2004. I authorize the Commissioner to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment relating to the filing of the Request to Account No. 50-2358.

Claim 3 has been canceled. Claims 1, 4, 6-9 and 11 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, and 4-11 are now pending in the Application. Since there are three independent claims and ten total claims, no additional filing fees are due. I authorize the Commissioner to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Account No. 50-2358.

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Applicant's representative believes to the best of his knowledge that the subject matter of the claims is commonly owned. The examiner has stated that claims 3-6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, and distinguished claim 3 and claims dependent therefrom on the basis of the guiding means (attached to the top section) including a pair of parallel planar projections. Applicant infers that patentable distinction would still exist even in the absence of the additional limitations of intervening claim 2. This inference is strengthened by the fact that the Examiner rejected dependent claim 2, and that none of the limitations of claim 2 form an antecedent basis for any limitation of claim 3. Claim 1 has therefore been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 3, but without the limitations of claim 2, which Applicant believes places claim 1 in the proper form for allowance. If claim 1 is again rejected, Applicant will amend claim 1 further to include the limitations of claim 2. The combination of parallel planar projections attached to and extending from the top section is not present or suggested by the prior art relied on by the Examiner, and claim 1 as amended therefore overcomes these rejections.

Dependent claims 2-6 are dependent from claim 1. For the reasons just given, claim 1 as amended is allowable, and therefore dependent claims 2-6 are also allowable.

Claims 8 and 9 have been amended to overcome a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for lack of antecedent basis for the term "the nail guiding means." All recitations of the offending phrase have been replaced by the term "parallel planar projections." for consistency with independent claim 7.

Claims 7, 8, 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) based on Stegmeier 4,815,888. Claims 7 and 11 have been amended to include the limitation that the parallel planar projections lie in planes substantially transverse to the major axis. This is readily apparent from the drawings, so no new subject matter is introduced by the change. As amended, the claims overcome the 102(b) rejection and a potential 103 rejection because the Stegmeier '888 patent shows flanges substantially parallel to the major axis. There is no suggestion or motivation to take the flanges (reference number 54) of the Stegmeier '888 patent and turn them transverse to the major axis. Turning them in such a manner would render them unfit for their intended purpose of guiding the sleeves (reference number 52). Therefore, claims 7 and 11 as amended overcome the 102(b) rejection and are allowable.

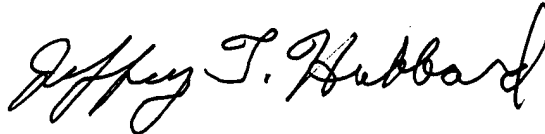
Dependent claims 8-10 are dependent from claim 7. For the reasons just given, amended claim

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7 is allowable, and therefore dependent claims 8-10 are also allowable.

It is respectfully requested that claims [COPY PRESENTLY PENDING CLAIMS TEXT HERE] be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. An early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeffrey T. Hubbard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "J" and "H".

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